

Name: _____

Business Ethics

Office Ethics

When business executives are asked for their input about office ethics, their responses include the following situations:

- ◆ Personal use of the computer on company time
- ◆ Personal use of the telephone on company time
- ◆ Disappearing office supplies
- ◆ Office romances
- ◆ Inappropriate office behavior
- ◆ Office gossip
- ◆ Falsification of resumes
- ◆ Plagiarism
- ◆ Sabotage
- ◆ Sexual harassment
- ◆ Receiving bribes
- ◆ Violence in the workplace
- ◆ Running personal errands for a supervisor
- ◆ Telling lies to protect a supervisor

Concern for office ethics can be grouped into four areas:

1. Conflict of Interest. This occurs when an individual must choose whether to advance his or her personal interests, those of the organization, or those of some other group. Which should take priority?
2. Honesty and Fairness. Honesty refers to truthfulness and integrity; fairness is the quality of being equitable.
3. Communication. This refers to the transmission of information and the sharing of meaning. Misleading communication destroys trust. Lying is a major ethical issue.
4. Organizational relationships. These involve the behavior of employees towards customer, suppliers, subordinates, superiors, peers, and others. Plagiarism is a major ethical issue.

Assignment: For each of the above bulleted items, indicate which of the four groups or areas you believe they fall under.

Scenario

The scene is a large office building with a manufacturing plant in the back. In addition to your job as administrative assistant to the company president, you substitute for Leslie at the main reception desk while she takes her breaks or when she is out ill. You have worked for the company for many years and know most of the 400 employees by name; therefore, you enjoy working the reception desk on occasion. Leslie, however, is not happy with her job. She does not work well under pressure and is sometimes irritable with customers and other employees. You are embarrassed by Leslie's behavior because you take a great deal of pride in your job and the company. Leslie has been snippy with you on occasion, but you think she may be jealous of your position in the executive offices. She is not one of your favorite people, but since you cover for her in her absence, you actually have to have very little contact with her.

In the lobby of the office, there are two coffee tables surrounded by several chairs. One particularly busy day you are subbing for Leslie, who is out sick. You have processed at least 200 people through the reception area to visit employees in the plant. About 4 p.m., an hour before closing, a visitor approaches you at the reception desk and hands you an envelope full of money and says, "This was left on the coffee table. It's not mine, but perhaps you can figure out who left it there."

You count the money, and there is \$150 in the envelope. Normally, items left in the lobby not recovered by visitors are set out in the lunchroom for employees to take...however; the person working the reception desk has first "dibs" on anything found.

1. What are the possible conflicts in your decision? There are several.
2. What are possible outcomes for each decision?
3. What are the possible impacts on others for your decision?
4. What is your decision and why did you make that decision?

Assignment: Type up your responses in a Word document and attach in an email to me by next class period. Put some thought into your responses and be as specific as possible.